

Steens Mountain Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes

September 14, 2004

Frenchglen, Oregon

Members Present:

Hoyt Wilson, Grazing Permittee, Princeton, Oregon
Jerry Sutherland, Vice Chair, Environmental Representative – Statewide,
Portland, Oregon
Pam Hardy, Dispersed Recreation, Eugene, Oregon
Tom Harris, Chair, Mechanized or Consumptive Recreation, Keno, Oregon
Alice Elshoff, Environmental Representative – Local, Frenchglen, Oregon
Wanda Johnson, Burns Paiute Tribe, Burns, Oregon
Cynthia Witzel, Recreation Permit Holder, Frenchglen, Oregon
Stacy Davies, Grazing Permittee, Frenchglen, Oregon
Harland Yriarte, Private Landowner, Eugene Oregon
Richard Benner, No Financial Interest
Jason Miner, Fish and Recreation Fishing, Portland, Oregon
Steve Purchase, State Liaison, Salem, Oregon
E. Ron Harding, Wild Horse Management, Hines, Oregon

Members Absent:

None

Designated Federal Official (DFO):

Karla Bird, Andrews Resource Area Field Manager, Bureau of Land Management
(BLM), Hines, Oregon

Designated Federal Official Assistants:

Rhonda Karges, Management Support Specialist, BLM, Hines, Oregon
Liz Appelman, Budget Analyst, BLM, Hines, Oregon

Presenters:

Evelyn Trieman, Outdoor Recreation Planner, BLM, Hines, Oregon
John Neeling, Wilderness Specialist, BLM, Hines, Oregon
Mark Sherbourne, Natural Resource Specialist, BLM, Hines, Oregon
Tara Gunter, Oregon Natural Desert Association (ONDA)
Scott Thomas, District Archaeologist, BLM, Hines, Oregon
Gary Foulkes, District Planning and Environmental Planner, BLM, Hines, Oregon

Facilitators:

Dale White

Commenting Public:

Susie Hammond, Hammond Ranches, Inc.
Pauline Braymen, PB Reports
Steve Hammond, Hammond Ranches, Inc.

Others Present:

Carolyn Freeborn, Steens Project Manager, BLM
Tara Wilson, Public Affairs Officer, BLM
Bill Marlett, ONDA
Josh Warburton, Steens Mountain Resort
Pat Harris, interested person
Doug Linn, Botanist, BLM
Paul Bradley, landowner
C.M. Otley, landowner
Teddy Hoecklun, public interest
Linda Veale, self
Rod McAfee, self
Pete Mehringer, self

Welcome, Introductions, Housekeeping and Agenda:

The meeting was called to order, introductions made, and the agenda reviewed.

Chairman Update:

Tom Harris reported a response letter was received from Kathleen Clark. She stated a committee is being put together to ensure nominations for these types of groups (advisory councils) are processed through the Department faster.

DFO Update:

Karla explained the nomination period for the vacant or soon to be vacant positions were left open longer which in turn pushed back the time of approval. The nominations were sent forward about mid-August. She is hopeful of having the nominations prior to the next meeting. She reminded SMAC that current members could continue 120 days past their end date. Karla presented the departing members with a plaque or book commemorating their time on the Council.

Karla thanked the cooperators who helped put together six volunteer groups to roll up and remove approximately 20 miles of fence. She expressed appreciation to Fred Otley for the Kiger fence. He expects after recovering from an illness to have the last few head of livestock out in a few days.

She thanked Stacy and Hoyt for the time they spent with her and the District Manager providing them with a better understanding of the history surrounding the area. She also thanked the Steens Landowners for their assistance.

Karla said the decision on inholder access was made in June and has since been appealed by both sides. Decisions on the Berrington Trail access as well as snowmobile use have not yet been made.

Recently Karla and Rhonda attended an RMP strategy meeting discussing how the Bureau is moving toward a planning based budget system. This will allow offices to go into a system, find a project identified in an RMP, and then build a budget to request the monies to complete the project. She felt the District could be in a better position to compete for funds if we have citizen groups helping prioritize the various projects as well as supporting the ones they choose demonstrating local support for a particular project.

Karla informed SMAC the Bureau's budget has not yet been passed. With the preliminary figures, the District could be short as much as \$170,000 to \$300,000.

Karla informed SMAC they or any interested public are invited to attend a media tour tentatively scheduled for September 22. She said at least six people were needed in order to hold the tour.

On November 4 the Sonoran Institute will put on an economic workshop to help people understand the economic data that currently exists. Knowing this is a concern of SMAC's, Karla invited them to attend the session which will be at the ESD from 9 to 3 with lunch provided. She asked anyone interested in attending to contact her.

Tom noted there was an opportunity for some press coverage either by write up or from participant's diaries concerning the fence projects that had been completed. As well as sending out a press release relating the pertinent details.

Cindy complimented the BLM on removing 20 miles of fence which was more than was expected to be accomplished.

Jerry stated his constituents were disappointed to learn George Stroemple had done reconstruction on the Berrington trail. Karla stated her staff had contacted him to discuss it and after consultation with BLM's law enforcement a letter was sent to Mr Stroemple.

Approve April, May & June Minutes; Review Action Items:

Motion made and seconded to approve all three sets of minutes as amended.
(Tom Harris moved; Jerry seconded)

Discussion: None.

Consensus Decision: Approve minutes of the April, May and June meetings as amended.

A point of concern was raised on page 11 of the May minutes.

Motion made and seconded to clarify the motion to read “prohibiting vehicular motorized travel outside of the designated areas. (Stacy moved, Tom Harris seconded)

Discussion: None

Consensus Decision: Modify motion on Page 11 of May minutes to clarify and state: “...prohibiting vehicular motorized travel outside of the designated areas.”

Follow Up Discussions from the Field Tour:

Tom Harris felt, because of the wilderness designation, there was evidence of more pressure on private property, and no trespassing signs as well as signs denoting private property are more prevalent.

Stacy raised the concern that over the years extensive discussions have been held about juniper and what to do with it. It seems few on-the-ground projects have actually been implemented and how best to go about this.

Karla said it would help for the SMAC to identify and recommend projects in priority order, which could also help in obtaining funding.

Follow-up Item: Karla to provide list of projects for SMAC to prioritize at next meeting.

Stacy noted that if any road blocks exist within the groups the SMAC members represent, he would hope SMAC members could lobby them to work things out together.

SMAC discussed the current funding levels, cooperators current and past, size of projects, staff assignments and the possibility of future funding for these projects.

SMAC agreed for Steve Hammond to comment on this discussion.

Steve spoke of the cooperation occurring at the level of the BLM - range coming out and working with private landowners to develop the systems that best suit the land and needs. He stated sometimes BLM hasn't been in a position to take credit for the cooperative management they have been able to provide. Sometimes dwelling on the mistakes makes people forget to notice the good points as well.

Charlie Otley raised the concern of many landowners which is being fined if private burning slops over onto public land unintentionally.

SMAC members discussed how best to encourage cooperative agreements that could overcome liability issues while meeting the needs of all concerned, the factors that need to be considered, and the fact BLM is trying to move away from the credo of suppressing all fires.

Stacy identified one issue which is when the private landowner cooperates with the government in these projects, sometimes the goals and objectives of Federal lands get transposed onto private lands. Members discussed the need to share information, BLM learning from private landowners about what best works on the land and vice versa adapted for elevation and topography while meeting the needs of all concerned.

Steve Hammond reiterated that often times the prescriptions the Federal government must adhere to are not applicable on private land. Because certain things don't meet the BLM's prescription window, does not mean private landowners can't do it. However, he noted that in doing so the landowner runs a greater risk of being fined, even if they've notified the BLM of their activities.

Ron spoke of the concerns when employees change, the history that has been gained and the lessons learned are either lost or put on the back burner as the new managers/employees learn the country and issues. He talked of how to make sure the knowledge is passed on, emphasizing the importance of public and private persons listening to each other to learn what has worked and what hasn't.

Steve Hammond wished it was that simple. In reality what the new managers are seeing is the file that has been built on the landowners in the past. They see trespass tickets, letters. If you go out here and screw up, there will be 10 letters telling you that you screwed up. If you work all your life to do right, they won't even remember your name.

Wanda brought up the issue of cultural sites and how they would be dealt with when working on private as well as public land that hadn't been inventoried. Karla stated the public land is screened in advance which could also be done for the private. If the Bureau is aware of a private land burn, it could be worked into the cooperative agreement that the lands be surveyed prior to implementation. She also stated the District Archaeologist contacts the Tribe to give them the opportunity for input. Wanda felt the agency and landowners could share information which would help protect these sites.

The group discussed ways to do burns cooperatively between BLM and private landowners and to make it a win/win situation - overcoming obstacles that develop due to regulations as well as policy.

Hoyt encouraged the establishment of framework to cooperatively limit liability and asked about a firewood program that could use some of the downed material. Cindy also brought up that only a small area is available for both poles and firewood, and there is a much larger number of areas where trees have been downed.

Doug Linn discussed the Applegate Fire Plan and the cooperation and agreements that were established to complete the project which was on a landscape basis.

Follow-up Item: Doug Linn to gather more information on the Applegate Fire Plan and bring it to the Council.

Dan Jordan Property: The proposals for the cooperative agreement with Dan Jordan and the possibilities of what might be done on his private land were discussed. Members felt it was encouraging to see this type of cooperation and the possible lessening of impacts on Jordan's property. There was some concern about closing any roads, placing permanent toilets, and fire rings.

SMAC asked what the formal written history was concerning agreements with Mr. Jordan. That information was not available from the staff present at the meeting. Harland raised the question as to what was different now; why were the proposals were being made now? Harland noted people are drawn back to this area because of the remoteness, the lack of facilities, and numbers of people. He expressed concern that if the amenities were put in place, more people would be encouraged to use the area and it could be dramatically changed from what is currently there.

Members discussed alternatives to permanent toilets and port-a-potties to address the sanitation issues that are increasing in the area but would not change the viewshed.

Members reviewed what Mr. Jordan needed to have done and what could be done to possibly accommodate those needs without waiting for the Comprehensive Recreation Plan to be completed. The group noted they had already made a recommendation at the May meeting as detailed in those minutes.

Public Comment

Susie Hammond, Hammond Ranches, Inc., brought up the discussion the group had on press releases for volunteer work and the government issuing them. She has a problem with the Federal government advertising the Mountain. She felt if the Mountain was advertised, there would be more people than anticipated and more people than can be managed for. Susie thought yesterday's tour was very good. She stated the Hammonds have in excess of 10,000 acres which looks a lot like the land SMAC viewed yesterday. She stated currently it is losing the economic value to their ranch even though they tried to encourage cooperative management with fire for at least 15 years, but it hasn't happened. The ranch had

called in several times to avoid liability and even that backfired. She was uncertain how much cooperation could be obtained from private property owners unless that agreement is landowner friendly. She stated the liability issue is a scary one and when the agency fines landowners, it is not in the best interest of anyone.

Susie wasn't sure what Wanda was talking about when she was speaking about archaeological information, but it came to her that the archaeological information known about are historic. Fire is historic. Susie said sites exist that had been introduced to fire and many times the roots and plants develop with fire. She believes private landowners and the BLM should manage the land on the Mountain with a priority of fire. She wondered why someone would put anything above fire since there is a chance fire would destroy it. Why not start with a clean slate then dealing with other things? Susie said Karla told her yesterday BLM had to absorb the cost of search and rescue, use of BLM's helicopter and people on the Mountain. Susie questioned why if this was the case, BLM couldn't absorb the cost of fire that came over onto public land. She felt there should be a process in place with cooperative management. As far as the idea of a summit on juniper management, she knew a number of them already had been in place but the road block as far as she could see was BLM. She felt the SWCD and private landowners know the value of juniper management, but BLM must create a process to enable this to continue and so far they haven't.

Susie believes that cooperative management is an economical cost. It becomes a terrific cost when private property owners have to go over and above. There is no process for them to have input and no way for them to believe someone is going forward with the private interest much less having to do it two or three times. Susie stated that private landowners don't have the general fund for a banker and they have to do with what they have. She felt a commercial firewood project would be wonderful. In the history of the Watershed Council there was juniper acreage that was cut and intended to burn the next year, but there were people around town who wanted to use the downed material. Economy needs to be put into the planning process on the Mountain and firewood users would benefit as well as other resource users.

Pauline Brayman introduced herself giving a brief biography including currently being a freelance correspondent and owning her own business. She stated she came away from yesterday morning's tour angry. Not angry at anyone, just angry because of the way things are. Angry that a project started 12 years ago is still in planning. The tour should have been of a completed project that showed a thriving aspen grove community. She noted Charlie Otley made a comment had he recognized what little tiny juniper meant years ago, he easily could have done something. Now there is a terrible problem with them. The argument could be made that juniper invasion is historically cyclical and sometime in the next millennium, juniper will be wiped out and it will be the restart of the ecological process of grass and forbs. She said there are so many examples of juniper

forests. She doesn't believe it is a right thing to do to allow Steens Mountain to become a Horse Ridge. She felt it was such a waste to lose aspen and wildflowers for which the Steens has long been enjoyed. Pauline related she traveled the area with her mother 25 years ago collecting photographs of wildflowers and finds it valuable to have that experience, to be able to compare the Mountain now with the Mountain then. She is very concerned the management of the Steens, as it is currently being done, will lose the special botanical place that is Steens. She stated there are four geographic areas on the Steens, and few other places in the world exist where plants from four geographical areas could be found. The loss of forbs is of great concern to her. Pauline believes the Mountain needs to be managed for the values that are treasured and not let it be replaced with a juniper monoculture. The viewshed she sees now concerns her. She said Karla spoke to a lack of staffing for ID teams and Pauline believes that is a valid concern. Funding might be better placed in hiring sufficient staff rather than nitpicking. Pauline stated she has no economic interest in Steens although her family members are cattle ranchers, they have no public lands. All their operation is private lands. She admits to saying sometimes the ranchers using public lands have an advantage. She's observed over the years the philosophy or accusation that private landowners using public land is a bad guy which is not necessarily true. The private landowners and the public land leasees have a very valuable history and input and they need to be listened to. Pauline said her comments are aimed at the protection and the continuing of a very special place.

Steve Hammond, Hammond Ranches, Inc., said he'd been up in front of the SMAC before and said then and as now believes this is set to fail. His optimism for any other outcome isn't terribly high, but he does see something evolving and hopes it is allowed to occur and maybe even exploited. He said Karla is in a position that takes a lot of criticism and she's handled the job quite nicely. He hopes the absence of the new District Manager isn't any indication of what this Council means to him. Steve acknowledged that Pauline added botanical to his list of environmental importance which also included fire and transportation. He doesn't see this group prioritizing things, which he wished would happen. He believes BLM is still dodging and if the BLM was dealing with SMAC in a fair manner, it would elevate the group in importance. Steve felt the SMAC is more important than the BLM allows them to be. He believes if the SMAC heard and commented on what George planned to do, the BLM would have to listen. Even though the SMAC is not a legal body, its input is important. The BLM builds files on people to be able to pass misinformation onto their next manager and if someone wants to do something progressively, they use their access to hold their feet to the fire. He felt the SMAC is in a position to weed out. He stated it was nice to see SMAC in Frenchglen because it is where it happens. He reminded SMAC they need to take the initiative to invite these people in when writing recreation plans or transportation plans. He reminded SMAC they are representing the people who don't have the time to be at this table. By their actions they are weeding the audience out pretty quickly and when they are all gone, then the SMAC will only be able to talk back and forth about their own

problems. That is the failure he is seeing and he hopes it is avoided by SMAC having a quorum to talk about the issues and what needs to be discussed.

Charlie Otley, Diamond Rancher, thought the tour yesterday was good and he found out about cooperative management more than ever before. He believes the cooperative management should be at the beginning of things not at the end. For instance Charlie doesn't know where his cattle will be going, but he needs to know how big the field is, how are the fences, what the watering conditions are, and how he will get the cattle from his deeded land to the new pasture. All of these are important to his operation and he'd like to know them ahead of April 15 next year. He would like to have this Council ask BLM to change their scoping time and to include him in the planning. He is saying this for those who don't know about running cows and don't understand you have to plan years ahead.

Dan Jordan Property:

Alice expressed a great deal of concern about human sanitation on the Mountain. She doesn't want to see what happened on the Deschutes happen on the Steens, and suggested a possible requirement for a scat cleaning machine. It could be something that is made available that would do away with the need for any restroom structures, which are normally too far away for dispersed recreationists.

Jerry said the possibility of doing the project was to be checked into with a report back and also if there is cost of doing this, then SMAC needs to weigh that with other priorities.

Dick could see the possibility of trying something new which the group talked about briefly. He felt this approach might also create a small business opportunity to make these facilities available. If SMAC or BLM makes it a requirement under appropriate circumstances, it could be a win/win situation.

Cindy explained the simplest method of using a 5-gallon bucket or something like it as the latrine. When the camper is leaving, they would put a lid on it and bring it down to a specified location. It is then placed into a machine which cleans out the bucket and processes the waste materials. These machines, through cooperative agreements, could be placed in various locations. Cindy felt compliance with any requirements would be directly related to how user friendly the machines are. She felt BLM has to make a job assignment with public comment, etc.

Karla said she would have her staff explore the possibilities with these alternate methods.

Stacy asked if the group was supportive of Mark's presentation yesterday. The only concern being waste disposal, and rather than move immediately toward a permanent solution, explore the alternatives.

Members discussed the concern of a gate being visible from the road and what discussions were held between the BLM and Mr. Jordan.

Pam expressed skepticism of the proposal because in her experience it is difficult to get people to transport any type of toilet. Cindy pointed out this is a bit of a different scenario and recreationists have had more years to get comfortable with using this type of system.

Motion made and seconded that in regard to the potential Dan Jordan Cooperative Management Agreement (CMA) the SMAC is supportive of the recommended road closures and vehicular limitations, but asks that further consideration be given to human waste disposal alternatives beyond permanent toilets. (Stacy moved, Ron seconded)

Discussion: none

No objection heard, motion passed by consensus.

Consensus Decision: SMAC supports the part of the potential Dan Jordan CMA regarding recommended road closures and vehicular limitations, but asks further consideration be given to human waste disposal alternatives beyond permanent toilets.

Stacy brought up yesterday's discussion on the field trip where they stopped at the end of Hammond Road and the discussion that was held there.

Motion made and seconded to write the letter, as agreed, that responded to the Hammond's concerns and that it be carbon copied to SMAC members and that the SMAC be kept updated on that issue, i.e. that particular road. (Stacy moved, Cindy seconded).

Discussion: None

No objection heard, motion passed by consensus.

Consensus Decision: A letter be written as agreed responding to the Hammond's concerns and that it be carbon copied to SMAC members and that the SMAC be kept updated on that issue, i.e. that particular road.

Potential Easements and Home Creek Access:

Mark Sherbourne's first topic was a matter of access near Home Creek in Catlow Valley. Mark reviewed discussions started prior to the June field trip when Juniper Ranch had approached BLM offering nondevelopment easements on three parcels. The question of whether or not BLM is in a position of purchasing nondevelopment easements throughout the CMPA was raised. Mark said he returned today to carry on the conversation on how to proceed with looking at nondevelopment easements. He felt that each time an easement is offered it needs

to be evaluated for potential, possibly establishing some resource criteria before the process is begun to serve as guidelines. That way when one arises, BLM would use those guidelines and bring that information to SMAC to obtain a recommendation as to whether or not they believe it is in the public's interest for BLM to pursue a nondevelopment easement on individual parcels.

Dick asked whether or not these particular easements were being offered to the BLM at a cost. Based on his experience in the Columbia Gorge, Dick believes a set of criteria should be developed so that all could have confidence in the review process.

Stacy and Hoyt noted that there was a proposal to develop the sites at one point but it was dropped; however, there is still a market for it. Dick felt the potential for development and the market might be good criteria.

Mark stated that one major criterion is availability. If BLM doesn't take advantage when the easement becomes available, the opportunity is lost. Jerry reminded the group that the developers had a site plan approved for an RV park. He thought he understood that some wanted the RV park there and wondered if there had been a change of opinion.

Hoyt stated he had no control over what BLM does in regard to Mann Lake but he doesn't want anyone camping on his land there. He'd rather not see any development especially at the access to Stonehouse.

Karla said she was interested in this conversation and believes BLM should be looking at private land in the recreation plan and establishing zones where it would be appropriate or not to obtain nondevelopment easements.

Alice felt everyone was interested in one item that could be criteria which is not having things impact the view. She stated there was a need for some sort of camping on the eastside but not at the expense of the view of Steens.

Cindy doesn't want to see private land included in a comprehensive plan. She would rather see BLM say they'd prefer nothing get built there and not weigh in on whether or not the owner can build.

Ron felt the least that could be done is to see if there is a need for BLM to develop another campground and to make some recommendation as to access.

Stacy felt the easements that arise should be pursued if funding is available. One of them is outside the CMPA, and he has a concern with including it. He is in favor of two properties inside the CMPA. He's not sure where all the details will be, but feels the Council should weigh in on some of them.

Motion made and seconded to pursue the proposed Juniper Ranch nondevelopment easements within the CMPA. (Stacy moved, Hoyt seconded)

Discussion:

Pam felt the third one has an impact on the CMPA and wondered if there was a way to pursue it.

Stacy clarified that this Council, by the law, only has jurisdiction within the CMPA.

Cindy stated if there are public values to protect and if there is going to be development, BLM should step up and pursue nondevelopment at a minimum on the property, especially if the landowner wants to. It seems to her the BLM already has the criteria.

Mark explained the land under discussion is currently used for livestock grazing and would probably continue to be.

Stacy felt these easements (nondevelopment, scenic, etc) are a huge issue and there are laws and regulations governing them. This Act allowed nondevelopment easements specific to just development, which wouldn't apply outside the CMPA. He worded his motion simply but fully expects SMAC to develop criteria because he knows this will be a long-term process. He emphasized that if an attempt is made to get funding, it will be important to have the details worked out, criteria developed, and prioritization in place.

Karla stated the biggest issue right now is funding and not quite sure how that will work out. It would be the same funding BLM asked for to accomplish other goals, but only so many dollars are available.

The Council discussed options of how to deal with obtaining the easements, the funding needed, if an intermediary would be a good idea, and how long the process would take.

Motion made and seconded to amend the motion to make it a "permanent" easement (Jason moved, Jerry seconded).

Discussion on amendment: Members discussed the pros and cons of a 20/30-year easement as compared to a permanent one and what effect either has on funding.

Objections heard to the amendment.

Roll Call: Tom Harris - No; Jerry - Yes; Wanda - No; Cindy - No; Stacy - No; Pam - No; Jason - Yes; Ron - No; Dick - Yes; Alice - Yes; Hoyt - No; Harland - No

Motion amendment failed.

Objections heard to the motion:

Roll Call: Harland - Yes; Hoyt - Yes; Alice - Yes; Dick - Yes; Ron – Yes; Jason – Yes; Pam – Yes; Stacy – Yes; Cindy – Yes; Wanda - Yes, Jerry – No; Tom – Yes.

Motion passed.

Informational: Mark informed the Council that BLM had retained 40 acres near Home Creek/Catlow Valley road to provide public access to the mouth of Home Creek and the Wilderness Area. He explained that there are two routes that go into the area, and BLM had a survey done. Public land comes within 4 ½ feet of the county road right-of-way. On a ½” scale map it looked as though public access could be easily provided, however, after the survey it was determined that was not the case.

Stacy explained what had happened with surveyors entering private land and setting up equipment that used extensive amounts of electricity and not getting permission. He had directed his staff what to do and that included asking some people to leave. He stressed it is not always a two-way street and it should be. His policy will be the same as how private property access is treated on the rest of the Mountain. As of right now, casual use is okay.

Fence Removal Update :

John Neeling and Tara Gunter from ONDA made a presentation to the Council updating them on fence removal efforts that had taken place in the wilderness. With a Power Point presentation they highlighted the various aspects of the project which were accomplished with approximately 4500 hours of volunteer work. The monies were requested for FY05 and FY06.

A contract is in the works for packing the wire out.

Wild Horse Gather EA Update:

Carolyn Freeborn stated all SMAC members had received copies of the EA. She updated the Council that there had only been two comments on the EA and after considering them, the proposed action was selected. Carolyn explained it is an important thing to gather 678 horses because the high side of the AML is 304 and that Herd Management Area has been reduced in size due to land exchanges. The local corral received horses from Beatty's Butte and the staff are working long and hard to get them immunized, some shipped out to sanctuaries or other adoption sites, and holding adoptions locally.

Ron talked of the necessity of ensuring the quality of the horse herds are maintained because that affects their adoptability. He encouraged BLM to get

someone who knows horses to do the gate cut as it is extremely important this process be done correctly or it sets everything else back. He also encouraged the BLM to follow what the management plan says and gather as many over the minimum level as possible realizing funds are limited.

Jerry stated having someone from the Sierra Club observe the gather is being worked out.

Ron explained the necessity for having people who know about horses and how they react be involved in the census.

Jerry raised the concern of ensuring the helicopter pilot knows it is wilderness and what the restrictions are.

Riddle Motor Excavation Update and Riddle Sanitary Facilities:

Scott Thomas informed the Council that Emily Mueller, who headed the excavation and is doing her doctorate dissertation on the site, had planned to dig five, 3' by 6' units. They ended up digging only about a third that much due to the amount of finds. He believes there will be more funding for more excavation in FY05. Scott talked of the visit by the Elders and other members of the Paiute Tribe as well as junior high school students who toured the site.

Scott described some of the finds and the details of the dig. He also talked of the possibility of similar sites on private lands and discussed possible cooperative efforts.

Riddle Ranch Sanitary facilities: Scott explained the needs and impacts of various types of toilet facilities and the flood plains.

Motion made and seconded to support BLM installing a Romtec toilet and to minimize any impacts to the view shed. (Stacy moved, Tom seconded)

Discussion: The question was raised as to how often the road would be opened. Although it is still being considered to open it more days a week, parking must also be taken into consideration.

Scott explained any time Federal dollars are spent on a facility, it must be compliant with ADA. It was suggested to make the asphalt a color that would blend in.

Scott will write the environmental assessment this summer.

Consensus decision: Support BLM installing a Romtec toilet and to minimize any impacts to the view shed.

Fire Prevention System: Scott stated this is mentioned in the management plan but not specifically. He would include any proposal for fire prevention in the EA as it is written. He explained that what he has in mind is to dig trenches and bury sprinkler pipe throughout the historic headquarters district. Currently the caretakers pull hoses and fire hoses around to water the grass and the proposed system would free the caretakers to accomplish other things. As the pipe is buried, certain locations would be identified and spigots would be installed to provide the potential to hook up hoses if needed. Scott said the intention was not to ask the caretakers to fight fire, but rather if they could turn on a volume pump, the sprinklers would help protect the historic site. He explained the various coordination efforts that still needed to take place, the various considerations since it is a wild river, and how best to approach this. He wants to add some insurance to stop fires from getting to the buildings.

Stacy supports the project from the standpoint of a few sprinkler heads is far less unsightly than hoses. His concern, however, is maintenance of the system. Scott assured him the installation would be below the frost line or would run right back into the river.

Scott stated he was looking for approval of the concept and then he would go ahead and analyze it in the EA.

Motion made and seconded that SMAC would be willing to entertain the proposal to install fire prevention and one watering system at Riddle Brothers Ranch Headquarters as long as it is low maintenance as well as reducing impact on the view shed. (Dick moved, Tom seconded)

Discussion: None

No objection heard, motion passed by consensus.

Consensus Decision: SMAC would be willing to entertain the proposal to install fire prevention and one watering system at Riddle Brothers Ranch Headquarters as long as it is low maintenance as well as reducing impact on the view shed.

RMP Protests:

Gary Foulkes reported the protest period ended yesterday. He's only received two but expects more. He will be working with the Washington Office to resolve them since that is where the decision will be made. He also explained the reason for the fact the newsletter did not have a date indicating when the protest period would be over. BLM has little control because the protest period starts when the EPA puts a notice in the *Federal Register* and the timeframe for the printer to complete the process.

The County had requested an extension to the protest period but local BLM has no authority to do that. The County has also expressed interest as to what their

role as a cooperating agency is from now on. Karla and Gary are going to attend a County Court session to discuss this.

Gary explained the types of protests and when they apply as well as the necessary involvement prior to any litigation.

November Agenda:

Council members identified topics for the November agenda as well as a discussion concerning interpretation of the Act.

Submitted by Liz Appelman

Minutes approved as amended on Monday, November 15, 2004.

Tom Harris, Chair

Date